DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 226 473 EA 015 421

AUTHOR Bagin, Don; Wherry, John H.
TITLE Winning America's Commitment to Education: 10 Ways to Go.
PUB DATE 7 Jul 82
NOTE 14p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National School Public Relations Association (Minneapolis, MN, July 5-9, 1982).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Viewpoints (120) -- Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Attitude Change; *Community Attitudes; *Community Involvement; Educational Attitudes; Elementary Secondary Education; Morale; *Public Relations; *School Community Relationship

ABSTRACT

School systems' attempts to obtain and maintain positive attitudes and strong support from the public are more likely to be successful if the 10 concepts discussed in this address are understood and followed. These concepts include making sure everyone involved knows the schools' strengths, problems, and plans for solving problems; constantly pursuing excellence in education; making sure that people's experiences with their schools are positive; and working to improve staff morale. The authors also urge educators and public relations officers to become politically involved, to take the public's concerns about discipline seriously and work to address them, and to stop fighting among themselves and start building coalitions to support quality education. The last three points are that every means available must be used to involve nonparents, that the business community must be involved in school improvement efforts, and that two-way communication must be established with all school audiences. (PGD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
X Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
John H. Wherry
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ED226473

WINNING AMERICA'S COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION: 10 WAYS TO GO

Presentation By

Dr. Don Bagin, President
National School Public Relations Association
Professor, Communications and School Administration,
Glassboro State College, Glassboro, New Jersey

Dr. John H. Wherry, Executive Director
National School Public Relations Association, Arlington, Virginia

NSPRA NATIONAL SEMINAR
ANNUAL MEETING
Wednesday, July 7, 1982
11:00 a.m. - 12 Noon
Hyatt Regency Minneapolis

It's a pleasure to be speaking to people who can make a difference--the people who will determine if the public will support their schools the way they must be supported--if our people are to become all that they can be.

John and I will be sharing the microphone today as we talk about some ideas for winning America's commitment to education.

Don, many of us are asking how long it will be before we get relief from the problems we're facing in education? When will education claim its rightful place on the national agenda?

Right now we pick up newspapers and watch TV--and see: inflation, recession, shifting power to the states and surplus cheese. But we're not hearing about education--unless of course, it's how the Education Department might be dismantled.

It's a challenging time for educational leadership. Public confidence in education has been and is low.

But not all is bleak on the educational scene. We know that people still value the importance of education.

Then what can we do to win support for what we believe in?

First of all, we've got to get all our facts straight. We can't be like the physician who after examining a patient, said, "You are without a doubt the finest 60-year old specimen I've ever seen." The patient replied, "Did I say I was 60, Dr.?" "No, you didn't," the doctor replied. I'm 78. That's amazing; how old was your dad when he died? Did I say dad's dead? No, you didn't. Dad's 99. How about his father. How old was he when he died? Did I say grandpop was dead? He's 120 and he's getting married Saturday, Dr." 120--Why would he want to get married? Did I say he wants to get married?

EA 015 421

We can't make the same mistake the physician made. We can't afford to draw incorrect inferences about public support for schools. We can't guess any more about those things that are vital to our existence.

We know--from working with superintendents in the United States and Canada--and from research that certain efforts will make a difference in gaining public support for the schools. We all realize of course, that this doesn't mean that every parent--every taxpayer--will like every decision we make.

It does mean we must be doing all we can to focus on what should be a top priority of every school employee: gaining support for our schools.

Frankly, the only way for us to get that commitment from all employees is for the people in this room to believe and communicate that gaining public confidence <u>is</u> the role of every employee.

Perhaps we've all got to run just a bit scared of the tax credit and voucher possibility. Perhaps if all employees realize that we could lose quite a few students, they'll do a better job trying to keep those students--and thereby keep their jobs.

No matter what the competition, we know that we can provide quality education for our students.

You must know that our perspective in this presentation today is that communications and public relations are key components of any attempts to gain public support.

We're not using public relations as a way to make schools look good. They've got to be good. An image, as many of you remember from physics classes--reflects that which is.

I would like to add a point here about public relations. It is badly misunderstood, but it is really simple to explain.

I put it this way. There are four basic principles of public relations. If we get these straight, we will understand what the concept is, and that's important for what we are talking about today.

Four Principles:

1. Do a good job!
2. Do a good job!
3. Do a good job!
4. Do a good job!

Put another way, 3/4 of public relations is doing a good job in the first place. "Communications" comes into the picture only in point number 4. Communications is essential, but, as in geometry, we can say that it is necessary but not sufficient.

We can think of public relations as the practice of social responsibility. It requires substantive action in the public interest, as well as communication.

That's our premise as we begin now to look at 10 ways to go in winning America's commitment to education. There is nothing magic about 10. If time permitted we could mention 12 or 16 or 20, but we are going to focus on 10 points that we see making a difference in those school systems with consistently high ratings in public opinion polls, systems with consistently good public support.

Don mentioned the importance of keeping our facts straight. That's number one among the 10 points we want to share with you today. We put it this way: Point #1— We must make sure that everyone involved knows what our schools are doing well, what what our problems are, and what we are doing to solve them.

In the last several years education has been a popular target of criticism in the national media. To a large degree the media has simply been reflecting public concern, but a blindly critical bandwagon effect has been created as well.

A careful look at the facts about American education performance shows not only that all was not perfect in the "good old days," but also that we have quite a lot to be proud of today.

The fact is that we have made tremendous strides in reducing illiteracy. It is estimated that 85% of our adults were illiterate when the Declaration of Independence was signed. Today, the latest figures from the U.S. Bureau of the Census show that only one-half of one percent are illiterate.

Our democratic system of education, unlike those many other countries, calls for the education of everyone. So, one measure by which we must be judged is the number of students we actually have enrolled. This chart shows our spectacular success. Almost every child is enrolled today. That's not a record to be ashamed of.

Even as we hang our heads and gnash our teeth about disruptive students, drug and attendance problems, violence, vandalism and cheating, we must also remember that a quick check in virtually any school system will show that on any given day over 99% of our students are not involved in any of those problems.

And we want to make an important point here, too. Just as we keep the public informed about our successes, we must also be honest with them about our problems. Our experience shows that school systems that do that increase public support, not reduce it.

When President Kennedy admitted responsibility for the Bay of Pigs, his popular support increased. It's not unusual in consumer products to see sales hold steady and then increase after a product recall is announced.

Admitting a problem is not a weakness. It takes some courage but it's seen as a strength. The public knows we are not perfect, and its reassuring to know that we are aware of our shortcomings as well--and what's more--that we have a plan to do something about it.

Now I'd like to share some interesting evidence that we, in fact, do have a tremendous reservoir of public support for education that we can tap if only we go about it the right way.

Sociologists tell us that one way to measure public support for anything is their willingness to spend money for it. This chart shows what various countries are spending on education. As we can see, the United States and Canada shown in the type line--grouped together as North America--outspend European countries better than 2-1. We spend almost four times as much per person as the Soviet Union and 14 times as much as Asian countries. That does not picture us as a society indifferent about education.

Here we see another remarkable fact. In the 1973 Gallup Poll about public attitudes toward public schools--76% said they felt education is "extremely important" to one's future success. In 1980 the question was asked again. This time 82% said education was "extremely important."

There is even more good news. The latest figures from the National Opinion and Research Center show a significant upturn this year in public confidence in education. Today education ranks third among all institutions behind only medicine and the scientific community. Today 33.3% of the public say they have "a great deal of confidence" in the people running education.

You will also be interested to know that in some comparative data just released, a greater percentage of the American public says that it has a great deal of confidence in education than does the public in 16 other countries studied.

If we examine the evidence, and there's lots of it, the message is clear. The public thinks education is very important. If the public has questions, they question the job we are doing as educators, the job we are doing running the schools. They're just not so sure about us.

That brings us to Point #2--If we are to win America's full commitment to education, we must agree that doing a good job is our most important obligation as educators. Simply stated: We must constantly pursue excellence in education.

Many studies have been conducted about what makes a good school and what makes a good teacher. In larger measure the studies agree and the answers are available.

We know that:

- Good schools are run by strong leaders.

We know that:

- Good teachers keep students working on those things we know are important.
- And the list goes on.

The point is that we know how to produce quality education. Our challenge is to work hard to see that we are implementing what we know works.

We also have an obligation to help the community decide what they expect from their schools. Some way must be found--community by community--to reach consensus on what the schools should do. We've got to stop the proliferation of school responsibilities and such activities as dental health week, bicycle safety week, national lettuce week--somewhere we've got to draw the line.

Dr. Jessie Kobayashi, superintendent of schools in the Berryessa Union School District in San Jose, California, sums it up this way:

> "We need to recognize that we can't be everything to everybody, and we need to limit our scope. And we've all heard that before. But what have we done as an organization? National or state? Or as a coalition or organizations to take a stand on limit-

ing our scope of responsibilities? We need to convince the legislature that we can do a better job when we are not inundated with regulations and mandates. We need to work with our communities to determine not where we disagree, but where we agree--what our priorities should be."

There are proven ways to reach community consensus on school responsibilities. As educators, we must take the lead.

We've got to personalize the schools more to raise the comfort level of those we serve. You could have the finest curriculum going. Your test scores might be the best around. But if your teachers, secretaries and others aren't treating taxpayers right, people won't like your schools. And, ultimately, if given a choice, many of them won't pick your schools for their children.

Point #3 is that: We must make sure that people have positive personal experiences with their schools.

As a parent of three kids attending public schools, I've had a number of experiences with school personnel--some good and some not so good. Example: The day before Gary started first grade, I received a call from his teacher, who asked: What can you tell me about Gary to help me do a better job of teaching him?

I knew that teacher cared enough to invest three extra minutes with my boy. And that's what most parents want: Teachers and other school folks who care about their kids and communicate that caring.

Contrast this experience with that of the caring teacher. My daughter, after a week of carrying lunch to school in first grade, finally mustered the courage to buy lunch. When she came home from school that day, she came to me crying. "Daddy, am I stupid," she said. I asked "What do you mean, Cathy?" "Well, Daddy, when I bought lunch today for the first time, I didn't know where to put the tray and stuff when I was done eating. So I stood there and the mean cafeteria lady said, 'Hey, stupid, put them utensils where they belong.' I didn't know what to do because I didn't know what a utensil was. Then she shouted, "Dummy!". . . Then the nice cafeteria lady--the one who smiles--told me what to do. Daddy, am I a dummy?" A personal experience that wasn't relished.

Example Three: A teacher called--Cathy's third grade teacher--and invited me to sit in on a class--a Tuesday for those whose last names begin with letters between A and G." And this Tuesday, Mr. Bagin, we're doing something special about 10:00 a.m. Could you make it?

How different this is from the often cold, impersonal, formal letter inviting me to attend some Education Week function because the principal is "desirous of my attendance."

I went to the class and was impressed. I saw the learning stations that my daughter talked about. I saw some excellent teaching and I saw my daughter learning. As I was leaving, I thanked the teacher and complemented her on the learning stations. I asked, "I used to be a teacher; how do you find the time to change those learning stations so frequently? I'm so glad you asked, Mr. Bagin, she said as she walked to

a closet and removed a large packet with my name on it. Could you cut out these materials and paste them up for me and have them in by Monday for our next learning station?

I felt I had been had. But all for a good cause--to help my daughter learn better.

All parents--all taxpayers have had plenty of personal experiences with school employees. Are you comfortable with the way all the phones are being answered? With the often less than warm signs that greet visitors?

Are you comfortable with the language that employees use when dealing with non-educators? Examples: Stanine, cognitive, affective.

As John Malloy notes in his most recent book, Live for Success, Jargon is for Jerks.

We can't gain public support unless people are comfortable with what we're saying. Trust is not built with words people don't understand.

Yet most school staff members have never been taught how to communicate effectively with our "customers," our taxpayers.

We strongly urge that you consider an inservice commitment to help all employees understand their role in communication and how they can communicate more effectively, to understand the important role they play in the personal experiences the public has with their schools. It's one topic that has a message for all employees at all levels of the school system.

Point #4 today is that: We must improve staff morale.

Ten years ago when we asked superintendents what their main communications areas of concern were, they usually said: newsletters and getting along with the media. Now the number one concern is frequently staff morale.

Most experts in school communications agree that the best way to improve communications is to start from the inside out.

We have found, in our research at Glassboro State College that school administrators are like other administrators. For some reason, they don't value the same things that employees value in relationships with each other. For example, our studies show that employees want to be told when they do a good job and they want to know what's going on where they work. Yet, on a list of 10, managers list these two as least important to employees, while employees usually list them and second.

For years superintendents have worked hard to attract top quality people to their staffs. Yet what's happened to the attitudes of those top quality people is scary. We interviewed and surveyed thousands of teachers and administrators to determine how morale was in public schools. Frankly, folks it's not good--in most of the schools we've visited.

A big problem caused by poor morale is that people stop submitting ideas to improve the place where they work To let you know the magnitude of the problem, here's a question we asked thousands of teachers and principals: "If you had an idea to improve the schools where you work, would you suggest that idea--especially if it wouldn't cost any money to implement?"

A surprisingly large number of employees said they wouldn't suggest ideas--between 60 and 80 percent in most districts. When asked why, they usually said something like, no one listens or they'll listen but no one will follow-up on the idea.

We can't afford to allow our idea people to be turned off. We've got to nurture their ideas.

Start an idea crusade. We have cards printed that say, "I have an idea to make our schools better. Print the cards on instant carbon transfer paper. The generator of the idea sends the original to his or her boss. A copy goes to someone you designate as the idea mover. If the boss doesn't respond to the idea (with a copy of the idea mover within 10 days, the idea mover is in touch with her boss).

You'll be pleasantly surprised with the many good ideas waiting to be encouraged.

You must address the morale issue or you'll face the problem of coast-out for the rest of your tenure as superintendent. Coast-out? You've heard of burn-out. Coast-out is worse because it's affecting so many more people.

In one of our interviews, we asked a high school teacher if he submitted ideas to improve the schools "No," he said, "I'm coasting." Asked what that meant, he explained: "I'm doing a minimal job, just enough to get by and not get fired. I'm coasting out until retirement." Asked how long until retirement, he said 22 years.

We've got to tap the talent of our staffs. That means telling them when they do a good job, being visible in the schools to show we care, and involving them in key decisions before those decisions are made. Duane Bachman, Superintendent in Piqua, Ohio says it well: "People don't care how much you know. They want to know how much you care."

Point #5 on our list of Ten Ways to Win America's Commitment to Education is this: We must become politically involved.

The fact is that school funding is determined by a political process. School laws are developed by political bodies.

Some have said very bluntly that, "Every community gets the kind of schools it deserves."

But we know it is not a matter of community predestination. We can identify the community power structure, analyze it, become part of it, question it, persuade it--and lead it.

We see political power shifting from the national to state levels with significant implications for the local power structure. A shake-up is underway. We absolutely must be involved if we are to responsibly fulfill our mission as educational stewards in the community.

What an impact it would make if we could all adopt the slogan now being used by the Fairfax County Public Schools in Fairfax County, Virginia. It reads:

"Fairfax County Loves Its Schools"

It is a lot more than just a slogan too. School officials can back it up with

scientific public opinion poll results. And those results didn't "just happen" either. School Superintendent Dr. Linton Deck is a firm believer in political involvement at the local, state and national levels. He's made it work and seen the results. We talked to him about political involvement and asked him what advice he'd like to give the rest of us. Here's what he said:

> "If you're not doing it, try it. Think candidly about how you base the values you hold and the things you believe are important about schools, how you can bring that positive influence to bear to benefit the schools for which you have responsibility, or the local schools for which you have responsibility. And work out ways to make sure that you do have impact on things that will make it possible for schools to be improved as time goes along in the future."

Let me just add another footnote before leaving the subject of political involvement. We feel very strongly that we must also seriously consider adding units of study for high school government classes about how public schools function. We don't do it, and it's no wonder that there is so little understanding on the part of so many about how it all works.

Point #6 is that we must take the public's concern about discipline seriously and work to address the problem.

Year after year, in the Annual Gallup survey of public attitudes toward public schools, we've seen that the public feels that discipline is the number one problem in our schools today.

Whether the problem is real or merely the public's perception, the fact is, we must deal with it. If the public thinks it is real--it is real. And, if we are to win America's commitment to education we must combat the problem, or the perception, or both.

Perhaps most perplexing is knowing just what the public means when it talks about "discipline" in the first place.

A series of regional meetings with parents, students and educators recently sponsored by the Missouri State Department of Elementary and Secondary Education provide us with some useful insight about what Missouri citizens mean when they talk about discipline. We can't prove it, but we'll bet that the public nationwide would agree with the answers from Missouri.

There was strong agreement about what the biggest discipline problems are. In rank order, the problems were identified as:

1. Disruptive classroom behavior
2. Student disrespect for authority
3. Student apathy for learning
4. Absenteeism and class cutting

We suggest that you invite your staff, your students, your community, to determine how they see discipline problems and work together to overcome them. It is easily

demonstrated that strong discipline programs are readily supported, even celebrated in school systems where they are developed and put into effect. There are plans that work in the Houston schools, in Atlanta, in Little Rock and many more. That's Point #6.

Point #7 is that: We must stop fighting among ourselves and start building coalitions to support quality education.

It's difficult for parents, legislators and other taxpayers to understand us. Especially when they see us calling each other names during negotiations or strikes--in many states. Some of the television views of teachers throwing rocks at administrators entering buildings during a strike don't build confidence in the schools where those people work. Neither do board comments that teachers aren't doing a good enough job to deserve a decent salary increase.

Dr. Robert Haderlein, immediate past president of the National School Boards Association, suggests that school boards extend an olive branch to teachers. Perhaps teachers groups won't believe the offer is in good faith. As one of my colleagues who works for a state teachers association said, "Wonder what new kind of trick the olive branch is?" Not until the branch is offered a few times will teachers know the offer is genuine. We've done so much to destroy a climate of trust that it will take a while to rebuild it.

But we'd better work on it; we need the numbers. And that means teachers, administrators, the business community, PTAs and anyone else we can identify to build a united front--a coalition--to wake the town and tell the people about education's needs, accomplishments and challenges.

AASA President Dr. Lloyd Nielsen, Superintendent in Roseville, Minnesota, said it this way:

> "The mutual dependence of the world outside of schools and the schools upon the world outside is being recognized by all parties. The effort is being made then too on the part of the schools, to respond to this concern of the external groups and at the same time for the external groups to know what the primary needs of the educational system are."

Lloyd's been very involved in the Wellspring Coalition in Minnesota to improve the economic climate of Minnesota. Coalition members realize they can't do it alone.

California, Florida, Connecticut, Minnesota, Kansas, and Iowa have all started coalitions to gain more support for education's needs. Other states are making similar moves. In each instance, it took someone to say, "This is important. Somebody's got to do it."

We hope that some of those somebodys are in this room.

Don, that brings us right to the next point. Nationally 72% of today's adults have no children in schools. Point #8 is that we must use every means at our command to get today's non-parents involved with their schools.

We have an increasingly older population. The birthrate remains low. Inevitably, political power is shifting to older citizens. There are more of them, and they are politically active. We must find ways to show older citizens that they too have an important stake in education today.

And there is reason for optimism. Today's non-school-connected citizens are the same people who just a few years ago provided very strong support for their schools. And elections within just the past few weeks show increasingly positive support from older citizens.

Community education programs and school volunteer programs offer ideal ways to get non-parents involved--older as well as younger non-parents. The Gallup Poll has made it clear year after year: Those citizens who have been in their schools for whatever reason, consistently have more positive attitudes about them. That's what community education is all about--the realization, as education pollster Ned Hubbell said, that we must quit thinking about education as K-12 and start thinking about it as K-65 and beyond. With education programs for all age groups, we can serve the public interest, we can practice social responsibility, and we can gain badly needed support.

Perhaps even more important is that we know how to get non-parents meaningfully involved in our schools. School districts from Columbus, Ohio, to Greenville, South Carolina--Dade County, Florida--Kansas City, Kansas and the David Douglas School District in Oregon are all doing it. And they have dramatic stories to tell.

In Kansas City, Kansas one senior citizen was raising her granddaughter and told school officials that she didn't want her to be a teacher; she tried to talk her out of it. But after having the opportunity to visit a high school for a few hours, she changed her mind. She said she saw today's students as they really are, and that now she is thrilled that her granddaughter is going to be a teacher.

It's the impact of personal experience again, Don, in helping to form attitudes about our schools. Non-parents must be involved.

Our next point is related to non-parent involvement. Point #9 is that: We must involve the business community in our efforts to make good schools better.

For too long too many educators have avoided seeking the help of the business community. Except for businesseducation day, we have done little to tap the talent and the support of business and industry leaders. And that's a shame.

You know, we have a lot in common with business leaders. Education leaders have suffered quite a bit as public confidence has declined. While that's been happening, business leaders have watched public confidence in their leadership plummet too.

Business leaders and companies want good relationships with the community. And so do we.

Business leaders want graduates with solid skills so they don't have to train them in basics. So do we.

Business leaders have sons and daughters and grandchildren attending our schools. So do we.

Here's what Rockwell International official Dr. Ray Reed in Dallas, Texas says. We asked him what advice he would offer superintendents who are reluctant to approach business people. I like his first few words: "We won't bite."

> "We won't bite. Come to and ask us for our help. We are open, are receptive to whatever they would like to do. We want this to be a cooperative effort. We are not trying to infringe on their turf, and we realize the educator has his responsibility and they are working hard to implant knowledge and to educate our children. We also feel that we have an equal responsibility to help in this endeavor. We don't want them to feel shy, and afraid of asking us for assistance because we are ready, willing and able to provide that assistance."
>
> Q. You really believe this kind of effort can work, don't you?
>
> "I know it will work, because if it doesn't work, we are in trouble. We are in trouble from the standpoint of the future of our country, and I am most concerned about the future of our country. And as you know, the future of our country lies in the hands of our young people, and if business, industry, the school district and all other entities in the community don't work together, our nation is not going to be as strong as it should be and can be."

Rockwell International has been working with Dallas schools for quite a few years now. They've helped in many ways. They've adopted a school. This means they free employees two hours a week (with pay) to volunteer in the school. They offer speakers and allow students to serve internships. They consider special needs requests. And they don't cross over the line of decision making that is reserved for educators.

This kind of thing won't happen--unless the superintendent does the talking to the chief executive officer of the company. The worst thing that can happen is that some companies will say no. But chances are they won't.

And while you're talking, you, of course, won't want to forget the other important half of the communication process, listening.

That brings up one final point. <u>Point #10. We must establish two-way communication with all school audiences</u>.

We must listen as well as talk. Listen to employees. Listen to students. Listen to the community. If it's important enough for a company like Sperry to spend millions on it, it's important enough for us to make it a priority.

Our communication effort must be two-way. It can no longer come down from the top. It must come up. We must be attuned to what the community is thinking about our schools--before a large group tells us.

One simple way to do that is to establish the key communicators in your schools and in your community. The idea is being used in hundreds of school districts. And it works.

It helps you identify sparks before they become fires. It allows you to get good news out in a hurry--without worrying about the mood of the editor. It gives you a built-in rumor squelch device--and it does all this at no cost.

How it works: You identify key people--on your staff and in the community--people who talk to and are believed by lots of people. They might be a part of the formal power structure as the PTA president and the town council president. They might not. They may be barbers, bartenders, beauticians. Or dentists, restaurant owners, or gas station attendants--people who talk to people.

All you do is invite them to one 60-minute meeting--never to meet again. And you let them know that in the letter of invitation and the follow-up phone call. At the meetings--limit each to 8 or 10 people. Explain that you'll put them on the mailing list and call them occasionally with important news about the schools. And tell them that you want to hear school rumors and questions that are making the rounds in the community.

You will have your own instant two-way communication network ready for use when needed.

The same approach can be used with staff--and with secondary school students. You'll always know what's on their mind. And that's a giant step forward.

Although we listed two-way communication as tenth, it's by no means the least important. But there are two things that are most important: A commitment to communicate better and an organization's communication plan. Without these two, little will happen and you probably won't make much of a difference.

Don, let me illustrate the importance of a public relations plan.

- Pretend we have all been promoted to a very important position--
  SCHOOL BUS DRIVER

- First day of school--Buses outside

- I am the transportation director

  --Proud to work with you
  --Best safety record
  --Best maintenance record
  --Defensive Driving
  --First Aid Refresher Course

- Brothers and Sisters it's time to go forth into the community
  and get the kids

- John, you forgot to give us any routes

- Don't wory about it.

LUDICROUS!

- But we tell staff to "go forth" and PR in public
- Must give them some routes!

IN CONCLUSION

There are obviously more than ten ways to go as we work together to win America's commitment to education. We think the points we have mentioned are some of the most important. Nothing we have suggested costs a lot of money. We know that the ideas will work. We can give you names and places for each. Many of the people responsible are with us here today.

All of the ideas require dedication. First, to doing a good job, and then to making sure that people know about it.

We are working with a public that has an enormous reservoir of commitment to education. Even the fact that our critics are so vocal today, so persistent in their attacks, is a good sign. They feel that education is so important that our society cannot afford to do a poor job.

We know, too, that by the time you get back home, you will have heard hundreds of ideas, many of which will get lost in the rush of resuming your duties.

But please don't let these ideas get lost. Take a look at the things you are doing and ask how much difference they are making. Then consider the difference these ideas could make if you make them a priority. THEY WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE. WE MUST WIN AMERICA'S COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION!

We think these students from the Dallas, Texas Public schools speak not only for themselves, but for all of us in describing the importance of the task we have ahead.

GIVE US A BREAK, GIVE US A BREAK . . .
OUR FUTURE IS AT STAKE
AND THE TIME IS NOW
TO WORK AS WE HAVE NEVER WORKED BEFORE
AT WINNING AMERICA'S COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION!

# # #